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REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 10-15, and 17-19 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 7, 15, and 17 have been amended, and new claims 18 and 19 have been added by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed.

In the Office Action of 05/08/2006, claims 4 and 16 were withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. Claims 4 and 16 have been canceled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to file divisional application(s) based on claims 4 and 16.

Claims 1, 7, 15, and 17 were objected to because the "[n]ewly added limitations are confusing relative elected species B" (Office Action at page 3). The Examiner requested that the claimed structure be more clearly recited according to FIG. 4A of the application.

As amended, independent claims 1, 7, 15, and 17 recite a vertical alignment mode liquid crystal display apparatus including: "at least one volume excluding member provided on all or a portion of only one side edge of one or more of said at least one electrode on one or both of said substrates, such that an opposite side edge or a portion thereof that is opposite to said portion of only one side edge of said one or more at least one electrode is without said at least one volume excluding member" (see, e.g., claim 1). It is believed that the above amendments obviate the claim objections.

Independent claims 1, 7, 15, and 17 also have been amended to recite that "the at least one volume excluding member is formed of a photosensitive resin" (see, e.g., claim 1).

Support for the amendments is provided in the specification, e.g., on page 52, lines 16-23. See, e.g., "Example 4," as described on page 52, line 16 to page 55, line 3 of the specification and shown in FIG. 4A.

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Claims 1, 2, and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,872,611 to Hirata et al. ("Hirata") in view of U.S. Patent 6,256,080 to Colgan et al. ("Colgan"). Claims 7, 8, 10-14, and 17 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirata in view of Colgan, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,313,898 to Numano et al. ("Numano"). Claims 1, 2, and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Colgan in view of Hirata. Claims 7, 8, 10-14 and 17 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Colgan in view of Hirata, and further in view of Numano. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejections of independent claims 1, 7, 15, and 17, the Hirata, Colgan, and Numano references, whether taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest a liquid crystal display apparatus in which "at least one volume excluding member is formed of a photosensitive resin" (see, e.g., claim 1).

In Hirata, there is no teaching or suggestion of using a photosensitive resin. Instead, the insulating film 47 is made of silicon oxide or silicon nitride (see column 20, lines 29-33 of Hirata).

On page 7 of the Office Action, FIG. 10B of Colgan was cited for allegedly teaching Applicants' claimed "at least one volume excluding member," in particular, gaps or notches 406 shown in FIG. 10B. However, there is no teaching or suggestion that the gaps or notches 406 are formed of photosensitive resin, as recited in independent claims 1, 7, 15, and 17.

The Numano reference does not remedy the deficiencies of the Hirata and Colgan references, and in particular does not teach or suggest "at least one volume excluding member is formed of a photosensitive resin."

None of the cited references, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest that at least one volume excluding member is formed of a photosensitive resin as claimed.

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For at least the reasons discussed above, the proposed combinations involving the Hirata, Colgan, and/or Numano references do not render obvious the Applicants' claimed invention as recited in independent claims 1, 7, 15, and 17, and claims depending therefrom are allowable for the same reasons.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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